



Lawn Care for Water Quality

Town of Hillsborough Information Sheet

Stormwater runoff pollution

North Carolina's No. 1 water pollution problem is stormwater runoff pollution. It can adversely affect aquatic ecosystems and our drinking water supplies.

As stormwater runoff flows across exposed soil or impervious surfaces — such as pavement or rooftops — it picks up various pollutants. These include oil, grease, excess fertilizer, pet waste, various chemicals, trash and sediment. Polluted stormwater flows down our storm drains and through our ditches, where it is discharged untreated into our streams, rivers and lakes.



Your lawn and the town's stormwater system

The Town of Hillsborough owns and operates a municipal separate storm sewer system or MS4. The town's system includes storm drains, catch basins, pipes, open channels, ditches, swales, as well as other human-made and natural stormwater runoff conveyances.

It is *illegal* to deliberately allow excess fertilizer, pesticides, lawn clippings and other yard waste to reach the town's stormwater system. This includes allowing chemicals and yard waste to reach streets and sidewalks, where it can be washed into the stormwater system.

Allowing yard waste in the stormwater system can clog it and cause flooding. It can also pollute local waterways because the town's stormwater system discharges stormwater runoff to local creeks and the Eno River.



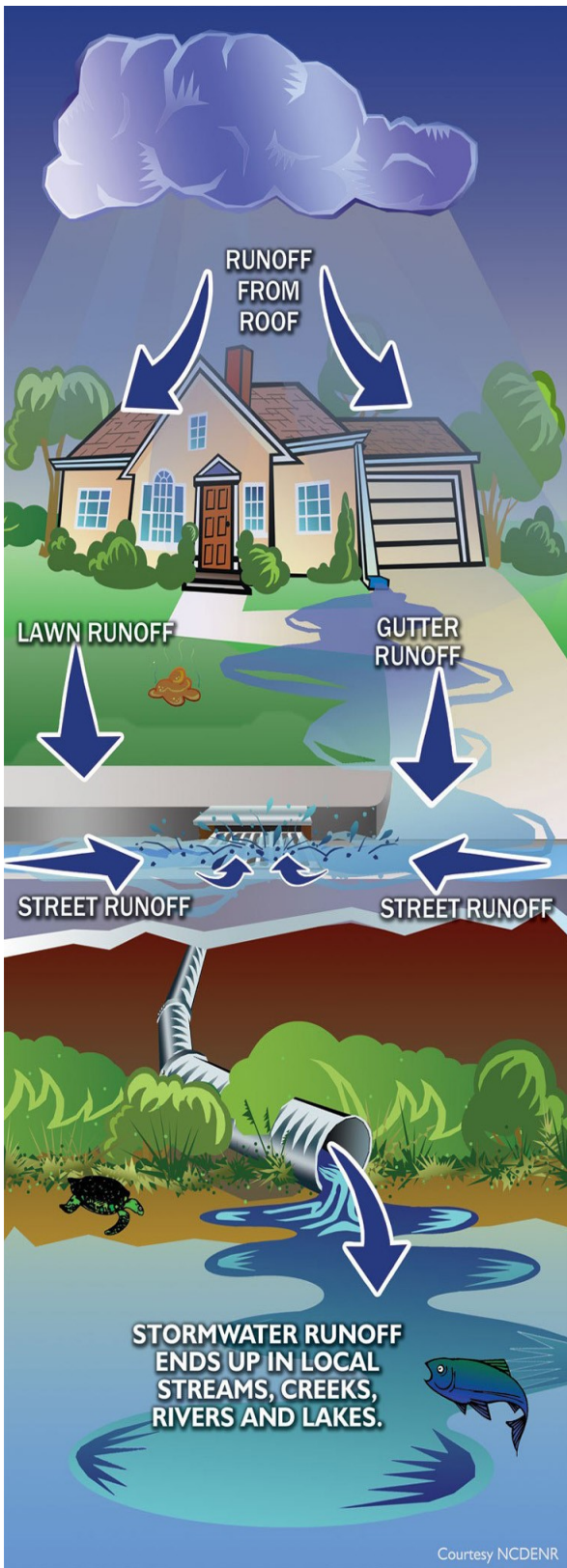
Riparian Buffers

Riparian buffers are one of our best tools to protect water quality. These buffers are undisturbed, naturally forested areas along streams, lakes, ponds, rivers and other surface water bodies. In Hillsborough, that buffer is a minimum of 50 feet and is regulated from development.

Riparian buffers provide important functions that include:

- Filtering pollutants, such as sediment, nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), pesticides and fertilizers.
- Reducing erosion and keeping stream banks from collapsing.
- Mitigating downstream flooding by absorbing stormwater and slowly releasing it.
- Moderating stream temperature and the amount of sunlight to a stream.

10 Ways You Can Protect Water Quality in Your Back Yard!



1. Leave grass clippings on your lawn and/or use a mulching blade on your mower. Grass clippings are a natural, nontoxic fertilizer.
2. If you don't want to leave clippings on the lawn, compost them or dispose of them in your municipal yard waste collection.
3. Don't put grass clippings or other yard waste into street curbs or ditches. Yard waste washes into waterways and feeds problem-causing algae.
4. Get your soil tested so you know exactly what fertilizer you need.
5. Sweep up any fertilizer that falls on hard (impervious) surfaces, such as driveways and sidewalks.
6. Use fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides sparingly, if at all.
7. If the forecast calls for rain, *do not apply* fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides. If it rains, products will wash into waterways before they have a chance to work.
8. Use mulch to keep weeds out of flower beds and landscape areas; learn about integrated pest management.
9. Maintain healthy riparian buffers and vegetate bare areas to reduce erosion.
10. Consider using native plants in your landscape, which reduce the need for chemicals and are more drought resistant.

Stormwater and Environmental Services Division

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